DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 156 281 JC 780 377

AUTHOR Parsons, Michael H.
TITLE A Sense of Perspective: Four Years of Experience with an Integrated Humanities Course for Career Students.
PUB DATE 23 May 78
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the "What ever happened to the Humanities?" Conference (Catonsville, Maryland, May 23, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Aesthetic Education; Community Colleges; *Curriculum Enrichment; Delivery Systems; Experimental Programs; *Humanities Instruction; *Interdisciplinary Approach; *Junior Colleges; Multimedia Instruction; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness; Student Attitudes; Teacher Role; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Hagerstown Junior College MD

ABSTRACT

In an effort to promote personal growth in an increasingly de-personalized society, an interdisciplinary humanities course, focusing on the needs of career students, was developed at Hagerstown Junior College (Maryland). The course, "The Arts: A Creative Synthesis", combines art, drama, and music with the intention of introducing students to a wide range of humanities through styles, techniques, philosophies, and media viewed from a modern perspective. Instructors come from one of the involved disciplines and attempt to synthesize the diverse disciplinary components into a common body of knowledge that students can internalize and draw upon. The course relies on a multimedia delivery system including films, guest lecturers, field trips, and student projects. The impact of the course on college curriculum and student opinion of the course indicate course design and delivery system are acceptable. Nineteen students taking the course in spring 1978 responded to an attitudes and characteristics questionnaire. Demographic data were consistent with the overall college population. Students were allowed to give more than one reason for taking the course. Of respondents, 63% were required to take the course; 18% said counselors had suggested it; 18% had enrolled at friends' suggestions; 18% were attracted to the course title; and 18% indicated the course related to their majors. (TB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED156281

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Michael H. Parsons

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE: FOUR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH AN INTEGRATED HUMANITIES COURSE FOR CAREER STUDENTS

A Paper Commissioned for:

"What ever happened to the Humanities?"

A One Day Drive-in Conference

Catonsville Community College

Catonsville, Maryland

May 23, 1978

Michael H. Parsons, Ed.D.
Associate Dean, Instructional Affairs
Hagerstown Junior College
Hagerstown, Maryland

JC 780 377

Introduction

Over sixty years ago, Alfred North Whitehead said "There can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which is not technical."[1] His assessment captures the essence of the challenge facing today's two-year college. For over a decade, two-year institutions have been focusing on technical programs. Specialization has been the watchword. Education for careers has been paramount. A reassessment is in order.

Today's society is characterized by a knowledge explosion. The amount of technical information available to society doubles every decade. What were facts for one generation became the outmoded misconceptions of the next. Therefore, today's students must become self-motivated, self-directed learners. They must be able to locate and delimit problems, pose questions about them, and advance alternate solutions. In short, individuals must be flexible enough to function in today's society while preparing for a future that is largely unknowable.

The two-year college faces the challenge of integrating society's need for technology with the individual's need for personal growth. Four years ago, Hagerstown Junior College (HJC) began an experiment designed to engage the challenge of integrating technology and the humanities. The results provide a perspective on the role of liberal education in career programs.

The Model

In 1972, HJC was involved in the process of becoming a comprehensive community college. Nine career programs had been added in a period of four years. Questions were being raised regarding the procedure for providing a core of liberal education for the new students drawn to the college by the career programs.

Members of the college's humanities division and the administration approached the National Endowment for the Humanities. The new students entering the college could, rightfully, be considered non-traditional both in motivation and goal. A non-traditional experience in humanistic studies designed for these non-traditional students seemed to be logical. A proposal was developed and submitted to the Endowment.

The proposal called for the preparation of an inter-disciplinary humanities core focusing on the needs of career students. The inter-disciplinary materials were to be presented using a variety of delivery systems to insure maximum accessability by the students. The proposal was accepted by the Endowment in the Spring of 1972. Thirteen full-time and three part-time faculty began work on the project in the Summer of 1972.

The result of the project was the production of three courses: The Arts: A Creative Synthesis, Philosophy in Literature, and Man: Some Humanistic Perspectives. The latter two courses proved to be too specialized for easy integration into the college's career programs. They remain in the catalogue and are offered periodically

for specialized groups. The Arts: A Creative Synthesis proved to be highly successful. An analysis of the course's impact on the college is in order.

The Arts: A Creative Synthesis - Design and Delivery

The course combines three humanistic disciplines: art, drama and music. Course content introduces the student to a wide range of humanities through styles, techniques, philosophies, and media viewed from a modern perspective. The individual instructing the course is drawn from one of the disciplines. Reliance is placed on a multi-media delivery system. Included are films, guest lecturers, field trips and student projects. The role of the instructor is to synthesize the diverse disciplines into a common body of knowledge that the student can internalize and draw upon.

The design and delivery of the course is based on the assumption that a comprehensive humanities course is an excellent introduction to learning and perception; it develops a critical awareness of circumstances. The effects of such a course are cumulative and long-lasting. From the assumption flow two goals for the course. First, the course is designed to provide an introduction to the disciplines. A glimpse of content and structure are provided; perhaps, the appetite is whetted. The student is able to decide whether further exploration of a discipline is warranted. Second, for those students enrolled in highly structured programs, a summary of the content and methodology of the humanities is available. The student obtains an appreciation of the utility of humanistic learning within the time available.

In a recent conference on liberal education in the community college, a task force stated that the purpose of humanistic learning for students in career education programs "is to develop in potential specialists a sense of perspective on human experience that goes beyond the narrow limits of a profession."[2] The Arts: A Creative Synthesis course was designed with the foregoing purpose in mind. The course has been taught for four years; what can be said concerning its impact?

Integrating the Humanities: Toward An Assessment

There are a variety of indicators that can be drawn upon in assessing the impact of the course. Two seem most relevant. The first is the impact of the course on the college curriculum. The second is student opinion of the course. It will be useful to examine both in detail.

The Arts: A Creative Synthesis was offered for the first time in the spring semester, 1974. The course began as a requirement in four career programs. In the first year, the course was offered twice; the enrollment was 41 students. Following the initial offerings, the course was removed from one career program. During the next cycle, the enrollment was 30 students. The course reached an enrollment peak during the third year; 70 students enrolled in two sections. During the fourth year (1977), 46 students enrolled. Finally, during the current semester (Spring, 1978) 19 students enrolled. It is interesting to note that during the life of the course, it has been taught by three different instructors, has been

part of four career programs, and has enrolled 206 students. It is safe to assume that the course has become an integral part of the college's curriculum. Further, students indicate by their enrollment that the design and delivery system are acceptable.

The second indicator, student opinion, is more enlightening. This author met with the students enrolled in the Spring, 1978, section of The Arts: A Creative Synthesis. An anonymous questionnaire was administered. The results of the instrument provide useful insight into who takes the course and their reaction to it. 63% of those enrolled are career students. 81% are enrolled at the college on a full-time basis. 63% are freshmen. 45% of the enrollment are working; the average number of hours is 15 per week. The class is composed of 54% males and 46% females. The demographic data is quite consistent with the overall college population.

The reasons given for taking the course are varied. 63% indicated that the course was required; 18% said that a counselor had suggested it; 18% indicated that a friend had suggested the course. Because the students could give more than one answer, several other reasons emerged. 18% said that the title attracted them; 18% indicated that the course was related to their major. The variety of responses indicates a wide-spread awareness of the course, its content, and delivery system within the college.

The questionnaire was administered during the last week of classes to maximize student awareness. Two attitudinal questions were asked: "I enjoy a course that combines more than one subject,"

and "I would take another course that combines more than one subject." In response to the former question, 63% answered "yes." To the latter, 72% answered "yes." The overwhelming positive response to the integrated approach would seem to support the rationale of the team that designed the course originally.

One of the reasons for developing the course was to provide the initial or, perhaps, the only humanities course which the student would experience. 73% of those responding to the instrument had taken one humanities course; 27% had taken two. No student had taken more than two. These results appear to be congruent with the stated purpose of the course.

The final catagory of the questionnaire allowed the student to comment on the course. 91% chose to comment. 50% of those responding were favorable toward the course. Positive comments included: "the course provided a beginning understanding of the humanities; the course helped remedy a personal deficiency . . . ; I enjoyed attending my first play." Negative comments included: " . . . more involvement in the drama portion; the course does not allow enough time for understanding all of the three components; and I wish we had more time for depth." The number choosing to comment indicates personal involvement with the course. All of the comments, positive and negative, were constructive. These results further support the importance of the course to the college curriculum.

Conclusion

Four years of experience with an integrated humanities course at HJC has provided a sense of perspective. Career students, in

general, tend to be task-oriented and goal-directed. To ask them to experience a course like The Arts: A Creative Synthesis requires that they abandon an old, comfortable reality and engage a mass of new ideas and feelings. The requirement should not be taken lightly. Yet, if the career student is to continue personal growth in an increasingly de-personalized society, the requirement is critical. The Director of the Division of Liberal Arts at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy grasps the essence: "It is possible . . . for our students to know something practical - to be able to earn a living - and to be educated, to be comfortable with ideas, to read and think."[3]

REFERENCES

1. Alfred North Whitehead. "Technical Education and its Relation to Science and Literature." The Aims of Education and Other Essays (N. Y.: New American Library, 1949) p. 55.

2. Frederic W. Ness. Poet on the Moon: Liberal Education in the Community College (Washington. D. C.: Association of American Colleges, 1977) pp. 10-11.

3. David [illegible]. Fedo. "The Promise of Academic Exile." The Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. XI, #6 (October 20, 1975) p. 24.

APPENDIX:

Course Syllabi for

Humanities 201A

Humanities 202

Humanities 203

HAGERSTOWN JUNIOR COLLEGE
Hagerstown, Maryland

COURSE SYLLABUS DOCUMENT

1. Humanities 201A, Arts Creative Synthesis 3
COURSE
(Designator, Number, Title, Credits)

2. No prerequisite
PREREQUISITE(S)

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES: (A Separate Sheet(s) May Be Attached)
Historical review of all the arts (music, art, and drama). Emphasis will also be placed on current events in the arts world. Films will be used throughout.

4. EVALUATION PROCEDURES: (Explanation of Quizzes, Examinations, Projects, etc.)
Observation paper 25%
3 Tests 75%
Attend Robinwood Players' productions 5%

5. TOPICAL OUTLINE: (Attached)

6. TEXTBOOK(S) USED:
Art in the Humanities by Patrick DeLong
Animal Farm
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf

Revised: 7-21-77

MUSIC

I. History of Music
   A. Musical Theory
   B. Symphony Music
   C. Musical Planes
   D. Four Types of Composers in Musical History
   E. Elements in Music

II. Jazz
   A. History of Jazz
   B. Listen to Tapes on Jazz
   C. Jazz Musicians

ART

I.
   A. How to Look at Art
   B. How to Evaluate a Work of Art
   C. Composition in Art

II. Styles of Art
   A. Impressionism
   B. Expressionism
   C. Surrealism
   D. Cubists
   E. Pop Art
   F. Abstract Art
   G. Black Art

III. View of Artists and Their Work
   A. Films:
      1. Van Gogh
      2. Edvard Munch
      3. Degas
      4. Matisse
      5. Pollock
      6. Jacob Lawrence
      7. Bernie Casey

DRAMA

I. History of Drama
   A. Greek
   B. Medieval
   C. Roman

II. Play Reviews
   A. Animal Farm
   B. Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf
   C. Three Recent Plays in the Area

HAGERSTOWN JUNIOR COLLEGE
Hagerstown, Maryland

HUMANITIES DIVISION

HUMANITIES 202: PHILOSOPHY IN LITERATURE

Course Description

1. Humanities 202 Philosophy in Literature
(course title)

2. Three Semester Hours
(credits)

3. Spring Semester
(when offered)

4. No specific prerequisites
(prerequisite)

5. Could fulfill Humanities transfer elective requirements
(transferability)

6. Course Description

This is a course which illustrates essential philosophical issues as they are discoved in selected works of literature. The course follows a developed outline arranged in philosophical categories enhanced by readings in philosophy and literature.[1] Each class has a specific reading assignment which is discussed for that particular date. Students are allowed interpretive freedom within the philosophical context of the class. Evaluation is based on acontract with minimum requirements for a "C" and maximum requirements for an "A".[2]

7. Course Objectives

a. General

Upon completing this course, students should have a deeper understanding of the basic issues which confront everyone's existence: ontology, ethics, the problem of free will and determination, the problem of knowledge, and the metaphysic of death. They will demonstrate their understanding in a final exam termed a final synthesis where they attempt to relate the general lines of the course's development to their own existence.

7. Course Objectives(cont.)

b. Detailed

These objectives are obtained by exposing students to the philosophical essence of each literary work. Dual readings in philosophy and literature cause the students to evaluate the literary content from a philosophical point of view. This process is further enhanced by supportive audio-visual materials which enhance the reading. Students are also encouraged to look for philosophical content in other aspects of culture; such as: the problem of free will as it is dealt with on formula-television melodramas. Or the problem of ethics and political expediency which occur daily in American political processes. Ultimately, the course should encourage an existential awareness of the beingness and becoming process of daily life.

Notes:

1 Outline attached

2 Contract attached

Instructor: R.L. Ballard

HAGERSTOWN JUNIOR COLLEGE
Hagerstown, Maryland

HUMANITIES 202 PHILOSOPHY IN LITERATURE

Course Outline

I. Ontology(Orientation toward Reality)
  A. Subjective/Objective perceptions of self & reality
    1. Through education
    2. Through relationships
  B. Self Awareness/Self Deception
    1. Buber's categories of relationships
      a. I--I; I--it; I--thou; It--it; Us--them
      b. Huck Finn as a literary model for self-discovery
  C. Self in society/cosmos

II. The Problem of Knowledge
  A. Subjective limits to knowledge
    1. Extrinsic learning
    2. Intrinsic "
  B. Analysis and definition
    1. The learning process
    2. Retention and regression
      a. Huck's intuitively acquired knowledge of life
      b. artistic and intellectual definitions of knowledge
      c. Buber's contrast between "it" knowledge and "I" knowledge

III. Free Will & Determination
  A. Philosophical Definitions of Free Will & Determination
  B. Aristotle & the ethical training of the will
  C. Institutional Determinism
    a. the family b. the society c. the occupation d. media
    e. education f. science
  D. Hardy's Jude--free or determined?
  E. Choice
  F. The Possibilities of freedom

IV. Ethics & Religion
  A. Defining good and evil
    1. In Aristotle's Ethics
    2. In Hardy's Jude
  B. The Ends of Life
    1. Aristotle & the doctrine of moderation
    2. Aristotle's defintion of happiness
    3. Jude s tragic end
  C. Great Religious questions

V. Aging, Death, and the Final Synthesis
  A. Aging
    1. Attitudes toward aging

Course Outline (cont.)

a. actions in response to death
b. the problem of senility
(1) In society
(2) In King Lear
c. The problem of dependency on others
(1) In society
(2) In King Lear
d. Philosophical attitudes toward aging

B. Concepts of Death
1. Christian view
a. Victory over death
b. Damnation
2. Stoic View
3. Materialistic view
4. Tragic View
5. Eastern view
6. Humanistic view

C. The Final Synthesis
1. The need for ultimate answers

VI. Politics--the Individual & the State*
A. Concepts of the State
1. In Aristotle's Politics
2. Historical Modifications
3. Utopias/Dystopias
B. The role of the Individual in the State
1. Aristotle's definition of "citizen"
2. Walden "I" and II
3. Individual and collective responsibility
4. Political expediency vs. "higher laws"
C. Toward a definition of Justice

* Misplaced on the outline--V. should be VI and VI should be V.

Suggested Program Schedule

Humanities 203

Spring 1976

A Comprehensive Perspective of Man

1. General Meeting - Orientation
   a. Coordinator presides - objectives, rationale, approach and materials

2. Topic One - A Scientific Perspective of Man
   a. Speakers - Richard Montgomery, biological
      Vaughn Crowl, Physiological psychology
   b. Film, filmstrip or demonstration
   c. Follow-up discussion

3. Topic Two - An Ecological Perspective of Man
   a. Speaker - Harold Boyer
   b. Film, filmstrip, demonstration
   c. Follow-up discussion

4. Topic Three - A Psychological Perspective of Man
   a. Speaker - David Lee
   b. Film, filmstrip or demonstration
   c. Follow-up discussion

> General meeting - synthesis, discussion etc.

5. Test - Topics one-three
   25% of grade

6. Topic Four - A Sociological Perspective of Man
   a. Speaker - Marvin Marcus
   b. Film, filmstrip or demonstration
   c. Follow-up discussion

7. Topic Five - A Historical Perspective of Man
   a. Speaker - Laurence Sharpe
   b. Film, filmstrip or demonstration
   c. Follow-up discussion

8. Topic Six - A Religious Perspective of Man
   a. Speaker - Dr. David Winfrey
   b. Film, filmstrip or demonstration
   c. Follow-up discussion

9. Topic Seven - Man the Valuer
   a. Speaker - Allan Powell
   b. Film, filmstrip or demonstration
   c. Follow-up discussion

10. General Meeting
   a. General discussion, syntheses, conclusions, etc. (turn in essay - 50% of grade)

11. Test - Topics four-seven
   25% of grade

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

AUG 1 1 1978

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES